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F.B.I. QUESTIONED NORTH 2 YEARS AGO

By FOX BUTTERFIELD

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WASHINGTON, April 30 — The Federal Bureau of Investigation questioned Lieut. Col. Oliver L. North in 1985 about money he was trying to raise for the Nicaraguan rebels from an Iranian who described himself as a Saudi prince, it was disclosed today.

But a copy of the F.B.I. report on the incident was lost before it got to the agency's headquarters in Washington in "an unusual technological failure," according to the bureau's Director, William H. Webster.

Mr. Webster made the disclosure in hearings this afternoon before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on his nomination to be Director of Central Intelligence.

Mr. Webster also said that at the time, in July 1985, Colonel North had asked the F.B.I. to delay its investigation of the Iranian, Mousalreza Ebrahaim Zadeh, who was suspected of bank fraud in Philadelphia.

Donation for Contras Expected

Mr. Webster sent a letter to the Senate committee, titled "Mousalreza Ebrahaim Zadeh, a.k.a. 'The Prince,'" in which he said Mr. Zadeh had described himself as a member of the Saudi royal family. Mr. Webster said in the letter that Colonel North told the F.B.I. agents who interviewed him that Mr. Zadeh was expected to make a large donation to the Nicaraguan rebels, or contras.

Mr. Webster also said Colonel North had urged the Executive Assistant Director of the F.B.I., Oliver B. Revell, to try to delay a grand jury appearance by Richard R. Miller, the president of a public relations company who was helping Colonel North raise money for the contras.

In a letter dated April 13 from Mr. Webster to Senator David L. Boren, chairman of the Intelligence Committee, the F.B.I. chief said Mr. Revell acknowledged that he had interceded to delay the hearing and that a Federal prosecutor in Philadelphia recalled receiving such a request.

Telephone Call From North

But in another letter dated four days later, Mr. Webster said Mr. Revell, after reflection, now believed he actually did not request the delay for Mr. Miller, though he originally reported he had.

Mr. Webster said today that in April 1986 Colonel North phoned Mr. Revell to ask him to delay Mr. Miller's grand

jury appearance in the Zadeh case, saying the appearance might harm sensitive hostage negotiations.

Mr. Revell knew that Colonel North was the senior White House aide concerned with the American hostages in Lebanon and therefore did not question the request, Mr. Revell said in the first letter that was furnished to the committee.

Mr. Miller was named Wednesday as a co-conspirator by Carl R. Channell, a professional fund-raiser who pleaded guilty to conspiring to defraud the Government by soliciting contributions for military aid to the contras under the cover of a tax-exempt charitable foundation. Mr. Channell, who was accused by the independent counsel in the case, Lawrence E. Walsh, was the first person since the Iran-contra affair came to light last year to admit breaking United States laws.

In a prepared statement, Mr. Miller denied that he had conspired with Mr. Channell "or anyone else for that purpose."

The disclosures today about what the F.B.I. knew about Colonel North's activities in supporting the contras raised further questions about Mr. Webster's role in the affair. But despite sharp questioning by several senators, Mr. Webster appeared likely to be confirmed as the new head of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Next Session of Panel

The Senate Intelligence Committee is expected to meet again Friday morning and Senator Boren, an Oklahoma Democrat, said he hoped a vote might be taken then.

Under questioning by Senator Boren, Mr. Webster said he had been disturbed to discover the material indicating Mr. Revell interceded to try to postpone the grand jury appearance by Mr. Miller. "It was most unusual," Mr. Webster said of the reported action by Mr. Revell, which was said to have involved contacting an assistant United States Attorney in Philadelphia.

Mr. Webster said he normally "would be consulted before such a call was made because it involved intervention" in the judicial process. But Mr. Webster dismissed the lack of consultation as merely "an oversight" on Mr. Revell's part and pointed out that Mr. Miller had eventually testified before the grand jury.

Mr. Zadeh was convicted of bank fraud for cashing a bad check for \$250,000 at the William Penn Bank and was sentenced to five years in jail on Feb. 25.